

BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TOWN OF CONWAY, MA  
DRAFT MINUTES  
January 19, 2010

**meeting open: 6:30PM**

**present:** Maureen Chase, Jack Lockhead, Chuck Trombley, Tom Spiro

**Finance Committee:** Roy Cohen, James Cabrel, Bob Stone, Patty Walker, John Pitz

**others present:**

**Appointments**

*Budget Hearings*

**7:00 Capital Improvements Planning Committee (CIPC) – Maureen Chase**

Maureen noted that the committee did not have a budget last year. She stated that last year a budget was turned down when requested so there was no change in operation so no need for budget as of yet. Jack suggested that the committee rethink the idea of requesting a budget as this might help move their work forward at a greater rate. Patty asked about what the committee had accomplished. Maureen said that the committee was going by DOR guidelines and gave a short dissertation on what had been done so far which included the committee currently working on a general Inventory, a replacement schedule for town equipment, including fire department equipment and buildings. She said that replacements of highway equipment had been charted and now fire trucks will be reviewed and projected replacement scheduling will be made with budgeting proposals suggested.

**7:30 Conservation Commission – Peter Jeswald**

Peter noted that there will be one or more committee vacancies. Tom Miner will be moving and leaving town and Jessica Roberts would most likely leave the commission. He said that they may be leaving, in part because of workload and public perception. Peter noted that the Commission was not the most popular organization in town and hard to keep members on board.

Peter reviewed his budget. He questioned the line item on postage and said their expenditure was less than indicated. He said that figure should be revisited for verification. The advertising budget was estimated based on reimbursement from applicants. Jack said that many departments had lowered their budgets and asked Peter to consider reducing their professional & technical services line item. Peter explained that he felt a reduction in this line was not wise because they used these people when difficult issues arose but Peter agreed that this line could be reduced by \$100.00. He explained that when money is needed for legal or technical services in larger cases, the costs are billed to the applicant. He was asked if the commission needed additional funding to cover such costs as administrative help. Peter noted that the Commission had discussed this before and had decided that it would not help, and noted the existence of a circuit rider who had helped them in the past.

On another note, Peter was asked about a hearing in relation with the Bardwells Ferry Road slope project. He explained what was necessary to move forward including meeting times and attendees.

**8:30 Parks, Recreation & Trails Committee – Deb McGranaghan, Craig Warner**

Their operating budget was level funded for next year. She mentioned planned events such as the pool party, hiking events and a winter sledding event, which were all built into the operating budget. The committee may also try a playground potluck event this year to help clean up the Town field with volunteers. Deb brought attention to the 5-year capital plan she handed out which included long-term maintenance items. The Committee will present an article on the annual Town Warrant requesting \$7000 above their operating budget. She pointed out that this year's request would include repairs to the tennis and basketball courts. She felt that the basketball court was in worse condition but the tennis court gets more use. Craig noted that the cost of resurfacing both at once might result in lowering the asked for amount. Chuck suggested that Town should be reminded that the committee only used half the money requested for last years' purchase of the play-scape and that this **might** help move this request forward at town meeting. John asked about the status of the proposed storage building. It was noted that it was being built by the Tech School for installation in the spring. There was a question as to new trails, and it was noted that Walter Goodrich was working with

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Ashfield and the DAR in creating an inter-municipal system. Deb said that annual improvements would include trail work as well.

Deb noted that the committee would ask residents for donations for benches and other items for the Town field. She suggested that plaques denoting the benefactors would be used where possible. It was suggested that groups and organizations might be interested in contributing if plaques were available acknowledging the donated items such as tables, benches, and grills. The committee will advertise this in The Visitor. John suggested trying to get a deal from potential vendors and Craig noted that they had already been doing so.

**meeting items**

- Approval of meeting minutes as amended for 1/11/10.
- There was a discussion regarding the Board of Health budget. The Selectboard and Tom explained to the Finance Committee that the Board of Health should not have a separate escrow account as this is illegal, nor is there a need for additional emergency money to be built into their operating budget. Deficit spending in emergencies were legal and would most likely be reimbursed by MEMA/FEMA. The reserve fund is also available, through approval of the Finance Committee, for non-emergencies and unexpected needs. There was also a point made about the need for capital expenditures, and how this spending should be paid for by the Capital Stabilization account.
- James brought up the issue of determining this year's COLA. He did not feel comfortable with the decision to tell the Town employees that there would be no raises, as employees were actually losing money through health care costs, even with a 3% raise. There was more discussion about meeting again to discuss this issue, and it was agreed that this would be addressed on the 25<sup>th</sup>.
- The Board signed a contract with Weston and Sampson to continue work on the Bardwells Ferry Road slope project.
- The Board reviewed the Van Cott resume and determined that he did not have the proper licenses or experience to be considered for the Assistant Highway Supervisor's position.
- Jack noted that estimates and layouts for the new highway garage would only be valid for a certain amount of time and should be acted upon so as not to waste money already spent on planning and testing. He suggested that there should be some forward motion and that the Garage Committee be made aware of this time limit. They should also be asked to report to town meeting on their progress. Chuck, Maureen and Jack spoke about asking Ken to meet with the Board to discuss the next steps to be taken.
- There was some discussion about signatory responsibility for signing the contracts for the school roof project. There was no determination as to what actions would be taken at this time but Tom was asked to contact Town council regarding who should be responsible for signing the contracts and what the ramifications would be if the School Committee alone signed the contracts. There was also discussion about the School Administration consulting their legal council on this issue.
- The Board decided to ask Bob Stone to represent the Town in the Union # 38 teacher's union contract negotiations. Tom will ask him.
- The Board discussed the COLA. Maureen said it should be less than 3% but more than 0%. Jack was in agreement. The Board felt they wanted the employees to know they are appreciated but also felt an obligation to tax payers with the cost of living (COLA) being negligible nationally. Part of the discussion included other Towns and tax payer needs. Chuck had conflicting thoughts but felt that 0% was not appropriate and thought that Conway salaries were low as they were. Maureen said the FRCOG salary survey showed that Conway had average salaries across the board. Chuck suggested that 2% was reasonable. All were in agreement.

**Mail and Other Items**

- other mail items as per agenda

**9:20 PM** Motion to adjourn by Maureen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jack, all in favor.